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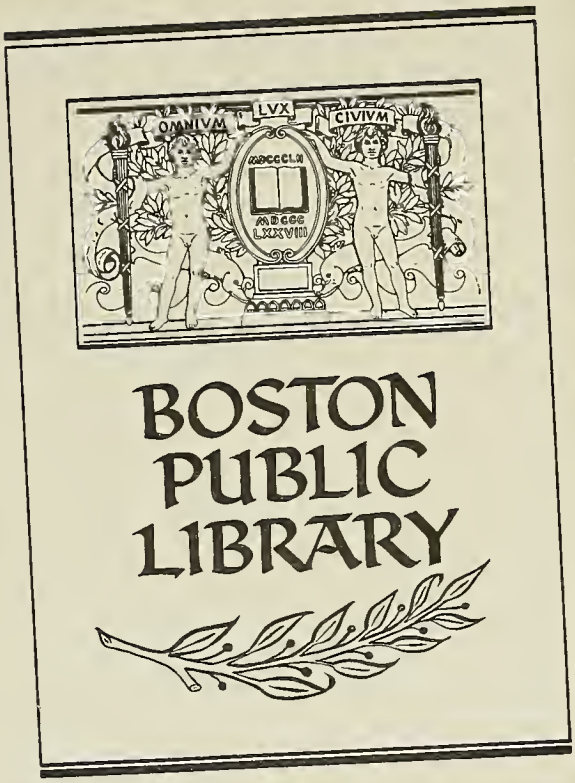

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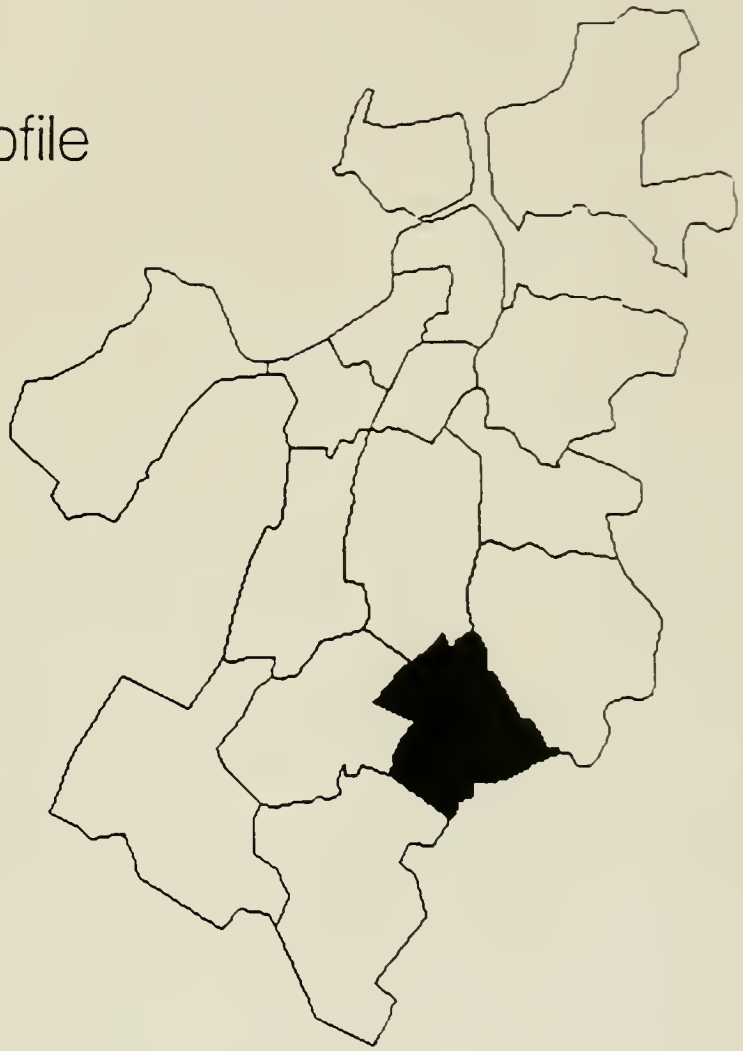
Mattapan

Neighborhood Profile

1988



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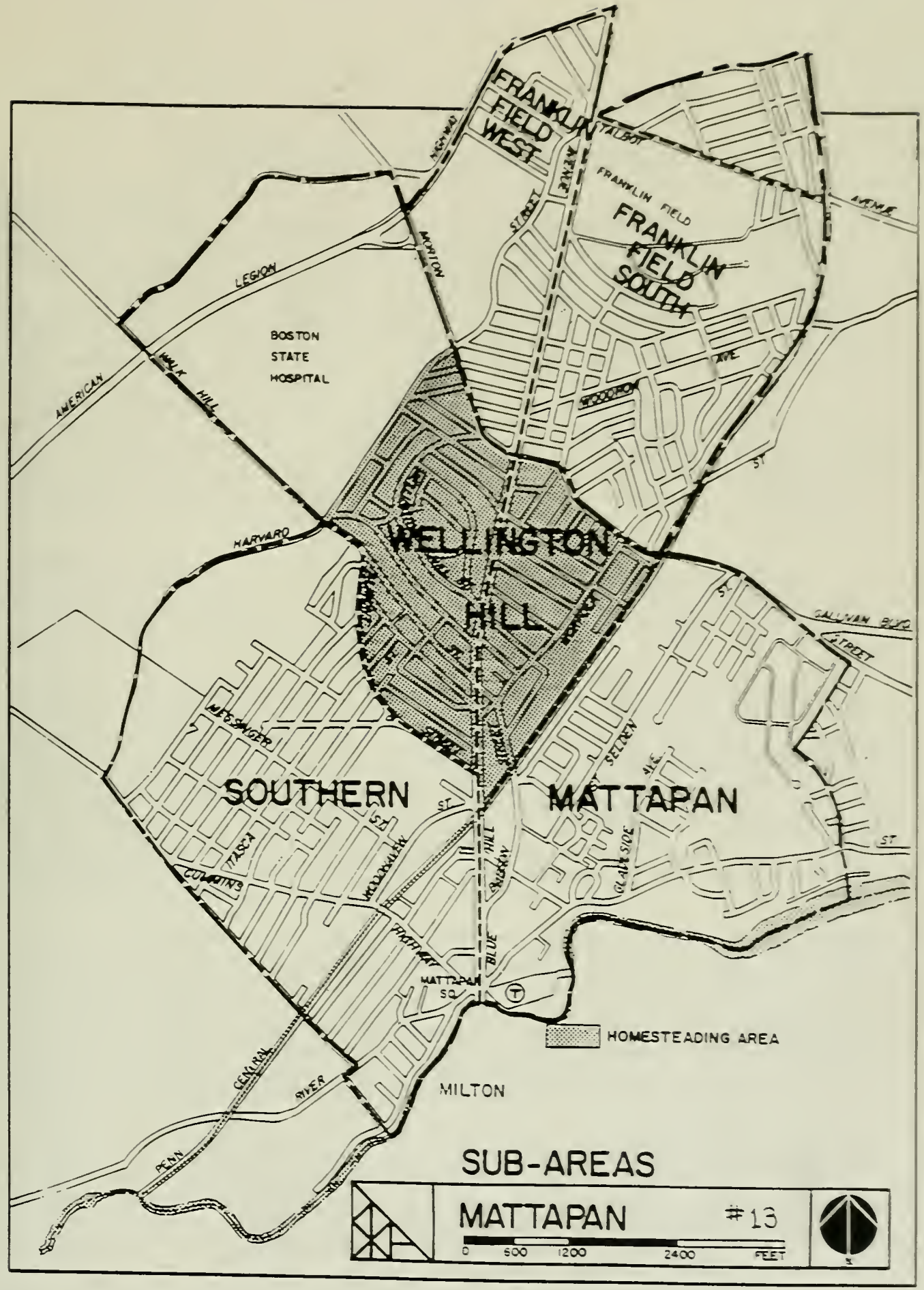
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MATTAPAN/FRANKLIN NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

Introductory Overview

Mattapan/Franklin Field is the second largest minority neighborhood in Boston, following Roxbury. Originally an area of Irish and then Jewish nationalities, the neighborhood developed a predominantly black resident profile during the 1960s and 1970s. The Franklin area is comprised of two- and three-family homes while the Wellington Hill and Southern Mattapan sections also contain a good measure of single-family homes. The northern (Franklin Field) part is primarily comprised of poorer minority families while South Mattapan is largely a black middle-income community.

The Mattapan neighborhood does not contain very many jobs since it is mainly a residential community. The Boston State Hospital site, formerly the largest source of employment, closed down in the 1970s. Mattapan's commercial districts present a vivid contrast. Blue Hill Avenue to the north contains very few remaining stores and many vacant buildings. However, Mattapan Square to the south is one of the busiest of Boston's older neighborhood shopping districts.

I. Neighborhood History

Mattapan/Franklin Field is an area which was originally part of the town of Dorchester, annexed to Boston in 1870. The name of the neighborhood was derived from the Mattahunt Indian Tribe, which inhabited large areas of Milton, Dedham, Dorchester, Roslindale, and Mattapan.

The earliest development in the area was near Mattapan Square, along what is now Babson Street. Railroad passenger service on the Midlands branch in 1855, and later trolley service along Blue Hill Avenue in the 1890s, created a residential construction boom during the turn of the century. The Franklin neighborhood became densely built with two- and three-family homes for Irish and other immigrants. The Wellington Hill area of Mattapan was also built up with two- and three-family houses but saw the construction of a sizeable portion of single-family homes. In the southernmost area of Mattapan, development occurred more gradually as single-family homes were built on large lots from the 1930s through the 1950s. Later during the 1950s and 1960s some "garden" style apartments were also built in this area.

The Irish were the original residents of Mattapan in the nineteenth century. However, during the early 20th century, Jewish residents displaced by the Chelsea fire of 1908 moved in to replace the Irish. Until the late 1950s, the Mattapan neighborhood remained largely a stable Jewish community. Then in the 1960s blacks who had been displaced by urban renewal in Roxbury became attracted to the Franklin Field area by inexpensive FHA insured mortgages funded under the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group Program (BBURG). During the 1970s, the southern portion of Mattapan, which was also a Jewish neighborhood, attracted more middle-income blacks

In the Franklin Field area the process of racial change was accompanied by housing disinvestment. During this transition many white owners let their homes deteriorate; some houses were abandoned, mortgages were foreclosed, and property was taken for back taxes. In some cases white owners who could not find buyers would move to the suburbs and operate their homes as absentee landlords. Real estate investors bought other buildings, charging as much rent as possible and providing little or no maintenance. In the early 1970s housing abandonment became severe as homeowners became unable to pay escalating operating costs or repair serious defects. In the 1980s, as the market improved and major improvements to public housing were made, the Franklin Field area stabilized.

The planning district is focused around Mattapan Square. Traditionally, the commercial shops along Blue Hill Avenue and in Mattapan Square had served virtually all the residents' shopping needs. They would walk in from nearby streets or take the trolley to shop and see friends. The elimination of the Trolley in the 1950s and competition from newer, car-oriented suburban shopping centers contributed to the decline along Blue Hill Avenue. However, Mattapan Square has successfully adapted.

Today, Mattapan is an improving neighborhood. Wellington Hill is a stable, middle-income, black neighborhood with rising residential property values. The surrounding areas to the south provide homes for many middle-income black families. However, Franklin Field and Blue Hill Avenue to the north still contain a large share of poorer families and public housing tenants living on inadequate incomes.

Table Ia. Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980

	1950	1960	1970	1980
Population	44,520 (5.6)	44,290 (6.3)	45,449 (7.1)	35,827 (6.4)
Housing units	12,068 (5.4)	13,397 (5.6)	14,950 (6.4)	13,064 (5.4)
Persons/unit	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7

Note: figures in brackets are percent of Boston total.
Source: a)
See section at end of profile describing sources, as well as the methodology.

II. Demographics

Mattapan's 1985 population at 40,400 has rebounded back from its low of 1980. The neighborhood is largely comprised of families with children -- many of them single parent households. Average household size was 3.4 persons in 1985. With 29 percent of the population below age 15, and median age of only 25.7 years, Mattapan has the youngest population of all planning districts.

Table IIa. Population, 1985*

	Total	Population in group quarters	Household population	Persons per household
Mattapan/Franklin	40,395	1,277	39,118	3.3
City of Boston	601,095	49,595	551,500	2.4

* Note difference between total population and household population. Most of the following tables refer to household population as explained in the end notes for source b).

Table IIb. Age Composition of Household Population, 1985
(In percent)

	Median age	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-54	55+
Mattapan/Franklin	25.7 yrs	29	21	16	25	9
City of Boston	28.8 yrs	17	23	22	20	18

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

After Roxbury, Mattapan is the largest minority neighborhood in Boston. In 1985, only 8 percent of Mattapan's population was white, and fully 84 percent was black. The balance was mainly Hispanic.

Table IIc. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Household Population, 1985
(in percent)

	White, not Hispanic	Black	Hispanic*	Asian	Other races
Mattapan/Franklin	8	84	6	-	2
City of Boston	62	25	7	5	1

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
* Hispanic includes self-designated Hispanics plus those who speak Spanish in the home or were born in a Spanish-speaking country
Source: b)

Mattapan is a family neighborhood. A full three quarters of Mattapan's households are families, but many of these are single parent families. Only 16 percent of Mattapan's households are single persons compared, to a 35 percent share Citywide.

Table IId. Household Composition, 1985
(in percent)

	Traditional families and couples	Single parent households	Single person household	Household of unrelated individuals
Mattapan/Franklin	44	31	16	10
City of Boston	36	16	34	14

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

III. Income and Poverty

The median income of Mattapan households in 1984 was $18,600, just slightly below the City median. The poverty of neighborhood residents also closely paralleled the citywide average.

Table IIIa. Median Household Income and Portion in Poverty, 1979 and 1984

	Median household income		Percent in poverty			
	1979	1984	1979 all persons	1984 all persons	1984 all families	1984 unrelated persons
Mattapan/Franklin	$13,345	$18,600	25	23	22	14
City of Boston	12,530	19,250	20	21	22	17

Source: b)

IV. Mobility and Migration

Fully thirty percent of all Mattapan residents were born elsewhere, outside of the U.S., Canada, or Europe, reflecting their Latin America heritage, and an unusually high number stayed put after reaching their current home between six and 16 years ago, as Mattapan became a minority neighborhood during the 1970s.

Table IVa. Place of Birth of 1985 Residents
(in percent)

	Massachusetts	Other U.S. and Canada	Europe	Elsewhere
Mattapan/Franklin	49	21	-	30
City of Boston	55	25	5	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

Table IVb. Years in Dwelling Unit of 1985 Household Residents
(in percent)

	<2	2-5	6-10	11-15	16+
Mattapan/Franklin	17	30	28	20	6
City of Boston	28	27	16	10	19

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

V. Employment

Labor force participation was high compared to the City average but unemployment at 11 percent was also quite high. Persons employed were working mostly in manufacturing and services. Only 5,200 jobs were located within this primarily residential neighborhood. The greatest share of these was in retail trade.

Workplaces in Mattapan are limited to retail districts in Mattapan Square and along Blue Hill Avenue, plus a few small service, trade, manufacturing and construction establishments in scattered locations. The vast majority of Mattapan/Franklin working residents commute to jobs in downtown Boston, other neighborhoods or suburban South Shore communities.

Table Va. Labor Force Status, Spring 1985
(in percent)

	Participation rate (Persons aged 16 yrs +)	Unemployment rate
Mattapan/Franklin	70	11
City of Boston	66	6

Source: b)

Table Vb. Industry of Resident Workers, 1985
(in percent)

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E*	Services	Gov't	Other
Mattapan/Franklin	27	7	6	35	10	17
City of Boston	14	16	8	36	11	15

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
* F.I.R.E. is an abbreviation for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.
Source: b)

Table Vc. Employment Located Within Neighborhood, 1983

	Manuf'g	Trade	F.I.R.E.	Services	Gov't	Other
Mattapan/Franklin	300	1,400	100	800	1,700	5,200
City of Boston	48,900	81,000	78,800	171,000	91,500	58,100

Source: c)

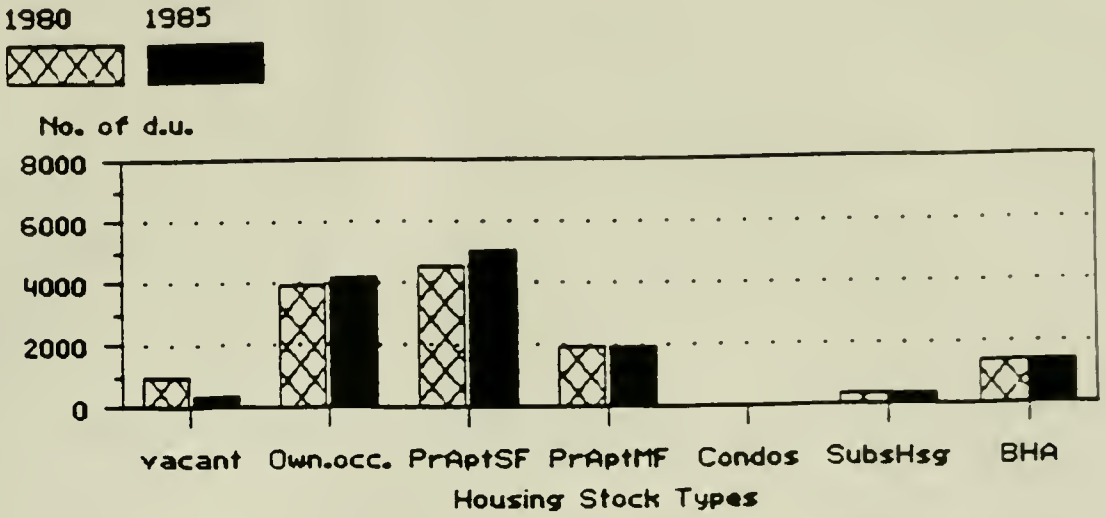
VI. Housing

Mattapan has a diverse housing stock, including some newer single-family homes, older triple-deckers, and scattered public housing units. Public and assisted housing, mostly in the Franklin Field area, accounts for 13 percent of its total stock.

Over two-thirds of its 1-4 family structures are still owner occupied, but among its pressing housing issues are a large number of vacant, inadequate units, little new construction since 1980, and declining housing affordability in recent years due to lagging household incomes.

Housing units only increased by 200 in Mattapan over the 1980 - 1985 time period. The biggest change was the drawdown in vacancy rates from 7 percent to 3 percent of all units.

Table VIa. Housing Stock Composition by Structure Types, 1980 and 1985
(in dwelling units)



MATTAPAN/FRANKLIN: Stock type: 1-4(SF)/5+(MF)	Private Housing and Condos: 1-4 vacant 1-4(SF)	Own.occ. 1-4(SF)	PrAptSF 1-4(SF)	PrAptMF 5+(MF)	CondoSF 1-4(SF)	CondoMF 5+(MF)	Assisted Housing: SubsHsg Mixed	BHA 5+(MF)	Total Mixed
1980	10% 925	3,894	4,524	1,937	0	0	395	1,354	13,029
% of pl.dist.	7	30	35	15	0	0	3	10	100
1985	4% 394	4,160	5,038	1,927	0	12	395	1,354	13,280
% of pl.dist.	3	31	38	15	0	0	3	10	100
change '80-'85	(531)	266	514	(10)	0	12	0	0	251
% chg from '80	(57)	7	11	(1)	inf	inf	0	0	2

Source: c)

Mean values of one- to three-family homes in Mattapan in 1985 was $70,000, considerably below Boston's mean value of $115,000. Median rents averaged $380 per month in Mattapan, just below the citywide median of $400.

Table VIb. 1-3 Family Property Values and Median Gross Rents, 1980 and 1985

	1-3 family property values 1979	1985	Median monthly gross rents 1980	1985
Mattapan/Franklin	$14,000	$70,000	$273	$380
City of Boston	32,000	115,000	254	400

Source: b)

VII. Transportation

Mattapan residents are more likely to commute to work by driving or MBTA since few workplaces are within walking distance. As a suburban neighborhood, Mattapan residents are more likely to have automobiles than inner city residents.

Table VIIa. Means of Household Transportation to Work, 1985
(in percent)

	Vehicle	MBTA	Walk	Other
Mattapan/Franklin	60	34	3	4
City of Boston	50	33	15	3

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

Table VIIb. Number of Vehicles Owned per Household, 1985
(in percent)

	None	1	2	3 or more
Mattapan/Franklin	25	44	21	9
City of Boston	39	42	14	5

Note: Percent may not total to 100 due to rounding.
Source: b)

VII. Summary of Recent and Imminent Development

The Mattapan/Franklin planning district will have experienced over $57.5 M (million) in investment over the 1975 to 1989 period, according to source e). The residential sector will have been dominant, with $53.4 M or 93 percent of all Mattapan development. This investment will have served to develop 823 dwelling units (DU), of which 325 DU are adaptive reuse (39%), 430 DU are renovations (52%), and 68 DU are new construction (8%). The types of units developed include 546 B.H.A. units, 191 rental units, 24 single family units, and 62 unclassified units.

Educational investment of $2.2 M, or 4 percent of all investment, resulted from the conversion of the Bradford School Annex on Morton Street into the Berea Private School in 1983.

Retail investment totalling $1 M is the result of 8 projects. Six of these are retail renovations which average $85,500 each, while two of the projects are new retail developments averaging $200,000.

Industrial investment of $774,000 in Mattapan will have developed 42,440 square feet (SF) of industrial space, accommodating 40 industrial jobs. Ten of these are the result an addition to a laundry plant, while 30 of these jobs are retained in the renovated building which belongs to the Hyde Magnetics Co.

Sources and Methodology

a) - *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1950 - 1980*

b) - *B.R.A. and P.F.D. Household Survey, 1985*, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, U. Mass. at Boston. A sample of over 2,000 households, carefully drawn to reflect Boston's household population, was questioned in the spring of 1980, to parallel the 1980 U.S. Census. In 1985, exactly five years later, the same methodology was employed again to obtain an update and to identify neighborhood shifts. This survey did not include the group quarters population

To learn more about changes in these planning districts by 1985, the several thousand observations available from the 1985 BRA/PFD Household Survey were differentiated to the limit. Knowing such changes as the shift in number of persons by race/ethnicity and age group in each district is valuable for planning. However, this divides the available data into so many cells that it limits reliability tests. The inferences should therefore be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

c) - *Boston's Changing Housing Patterns, 1970 to 1985*, Rolf Goetze, consultant to the B.R.A., November 1986. The 1980 U.S. Census does not specifically identify assisted dwelling units or the structure types within which they occur. It also does not indicate the type of stock in which condominiums are located, or when rental dwellings are in resident-owned structures. Therefore, available city data were carefully analyzed to obtain an overview and identify current housing patterns, as described in this source paper.

To aid in tracing the 1980 to 1985 changes in Table VIa, the housing stock was divided into units located in 1-4 unit structures, and those in 5 or more multi-unit structures. The 1-4s, dubbed **1-4(SF)** for single family, are largely singles, duplexes and triple-deckers, and tend to have a high rate of owner occupancy. **PrAptSF** designates the private apartments rented in this stock. In 1984, significant condominium conversion of triple-deckers commenced in some districts, shown as **CondoSF**.

Multifamily is designated as **5+(MF)**, and includes private rentals in this stock, **PrAptMF**, and condominiums, **CondoMF**, as well as public housing owned and managed by the Boston Housing Authority, **BHA**. Subsidized housing, **SubsHsg**, refers the to privately-owned developments assisted under such federal programs as Section 221(d)(3), Section 236, and Section 8, as well as state assistance programs under EOCD and MHFA. The newly built assisted housing tends to be in multifamily structures, whereas the rehabilitated stock is more likely to be in 1-4 unit stock.

Table VIa also shows how the total stock in each time period is distributed, as well as the absolute and percent change.

d) - *U.S. Bureau of the Census, "County Business Patterns," 1983*

e) - *A Summary and Survey of Development in Boston, 1975 - 1989*, John Avault and Mark Johnson, April 1987, based on compilations maintained on "ULTRALIST" by the BRA Research Department